

Message Text

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ACTION INSE-00

INFO OCT-01 VOE-00 ISO-00 SCA-01 EB-11 ARA-10 /023 W

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R 142105Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9445

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 5077

DEPT PLEASE PASS INS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, CVIS, OVIP, DR

SUBJECT: INS FINE AGAINST PAA FOR TRANSPORTING OF UNDOCUMENTED
PASSENGER

1. AMBASSADOR HAS RECEIVED LETTER DATED DEC 10 FROM
LOCAL AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN WHICH STATES IN PART AS FOLLOWS:
QUOTE: ON THE 6TH OF DEC LAST, I SAW OFF AT THE AIRPORT
SENOR ALFREDO SANCHEZ BELLA, WHO HAD BEEN OUR GUEST HERE.
AS YOU KNOW, HE IS PRESIDENT OF THE BANCO HIPOTECARIO OF MADRID,
AND AN EX-CABINET MINISTER. HE FLEW ON PANAM FLIGHT NO. 234
TO NEW YORK. THE PEOPLE HERE AT PANAM NOW TELL ME THAT SENOR
SANCHEZ BELLA HAD NO VISA ON HIS DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT. YOUR
IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES VERY KINDLY LET HIM INTO THE COUNTRY
(HE HAD A BUSINESS MEETING IN WASHINGTON), BUT THE PANAM OFFICE
HERE HAS ALREADY BEEN NOTIFIED OF A FINE FOR \$2,000 BECAUSE
THEY DID NOT CHECK HIS PASSPORT. FOR REASONS WHICH I WILL
EXPLAIN, I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT THEY ARE NOT BLAME, AND
I WISH TO ASSUME THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OVERSIGHT.
AS I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS WHOLE VISIT, I SHOULD, OF COURSE,
HAVE SEEN TO IT THAT HE HAD HIS PROPER ENTRY VISA. IT NEVER
OCCURED TO ME TO ASK. SECONDLY, THE PANAM DESK AT THE AIRPORT
WAS WORKING UNDER EXTREME AND UNUSUAL STRESS THAT PARTICULAR
DAY; THERE HAD BEEN A STRIKE AT KENNEDY, THEIR OWN FLIGHT WAS
UNCERTAIN, AND THE PASSENGERS WERE SWITCHING BACK AND FORTH
BETWEEN PANAM AND EASTERN, CANCELLING AND RESERVING AGAIN IN
AN ATMOSPHERE OF EXCEPTIONAL PRESSURE AND HASTE. THIRDLY, AND
MOST IMPORTANTLY, IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS I ARRIVED AND INTRO-
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DUCED MY GUEST, A VIP, WHO I WAS PERSONALLY ESCORTING AND

GUARANTEEING AND ASKING FOR PRIORITY. THE PANAM EMPLOYEES WERE MOST DEFERENTIAL AND POLITE, AND NO DOUBT, IT SEEMED UNIMAGINABLE TO THEM THAT MY GUEST'S PASSPORT SHOULD NOT BE IN ORDER, AND THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE DISCOURTEOUS TO ASK ME. ALTHOUGH THEY MAY, TECHNICALLY, HAVE BEEN AT FAULT, IN THE CHAOTIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE MOMENT AND WITH THE PRESSURE I WAS BRINGING TO BEAR TO GET HIM PROMPT AND PRIOR ATTENTION, IT SEEMS UNFAIR THAT THEY SHOULD BE PUNISHED FOR THEIR COURTESY AND KINDNESS TO ME, WHEN I MISTAKENTLY TOLD THEM THAT HIS PASSPORT WAS IN ORDER AND TO PLEASE PROCEED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD LIKE THROUGH THIS LETTER WHICH, OF COURSE, YOU MAY USE AS YOU THINK FIT, TO EXTEND MY DEEPEST APOLOGIES FOR THIS OVERSIGHT BOTH TO YOUR FEDERAL AUTHORITIES AND TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS. LET ME, THEN, IN ALL JUSTICE, HEAP ASHES ON MY OWN HEAD AND HOPE THAT MY REGRETS FOR THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED MAY BE ACCEPTED, AND THAT THE PUNISHMENT WILL BE LIFTED FROM AN OFFICE AND ITS EMPLOYEES WHO, IN EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS, WERE ONLY DOING THEIR BEST TO BE COURTEOUS AND EFFICIENT TO A FOREIGN ENVOY AND HIS VIP GUEST.

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2. IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE EMBASSY HOPES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR US IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION OFFICIALS TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY. IN ANY CASE, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING OF THE DISPOSITION OF THIS MATTER.
HURWITCH

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